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Barriers to Faith: An Annotated Bibliography

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Abstract

A review of the recent book publications related to the spring theme, "Unity in Christ." We include the following titles.

- Anderson, Tawa J. *Why Believe: Christian Apologetics for a Skeptical Age (Hobbs College Library)*, edited by Heath A. Thomas. Nashville: B&H Publishing Group. 2021. ISBN-13: 978-1087724232. 336 pages. \$26.99.
- Bahnsen, Greg L. *By This Standard: The Authority of God's Law Today*. Murrell's Inlet, South Carolina: Covenant Media Press, 2020. ISBN-13: 978-0998025216. 275 pages. \$30.00.
- Bass, Justin W. *The Bedrock of Christianity: The Unalterable Facts of Jesus' Death and Resurrection*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020. ISBN-13: 978-1683593607. 272 pages. \$18.99.
- Enns, Peter. *How the Bible Actually Works: in Which I Explain How an Ancient, Ambiguous, and Diverse Book Leads Us to Wisdom Rather Than Answers—and Why That's Great News*. First edition. San Francisco: HarperOne, 2019. ISBN-13: 978-0062686749. 304 pages. \$15.99.
- Geisler, David and Norman Geisler. *Conversational Evangelism: Connecting with People to Share Jesus*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers. 2014. ISBN-13: 978-0736950831. 256 pages. \$15.99.
- McFarland, Alex. *The 10 Most Common Objections to Christianity*. Minneapolis, MN. Bethany House, 2007. ISBN-13: 978-0764215162. 256 pages. \$16.00.
- McLaughlin, Rebecca. *Confronting Christianity: 12 Hard Questions for the World's Largest Religion*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019. ISBN-13: 978-1433564239. 240 pages. \$24.99.
- Murphy, Cara L. T. *The Inquisitive Christ: 12 Engaging Questions*. Brentwood, TN: FaithWords. 2020. ISBN-13: 978-1546038375. 288 pages. \$27.00.
- Strahan, Joshua Marshall. *The Basics of Christian Belief: Bible, Theology, and Life's Big Questions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. 2020. ISBN-13: 978-1540962010. 240 pages. \$49.99.
- Swain, Scott R. *The Trinity: An Introduction (Short Studies in Systematic Theology)*, edited by Graham A. Cole and Oren R. Martin. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020. ISBN-13: 978-1433561214. 160 pages. \$15.99.
- Wright, N. T. *Broken Signposts: How Christianity Makes Sense of the World*. New York, NY: HarperOne. ISBN-13: 978-0062564092. 280 pages. 2020. \$27.99.

Keywords

B&H Publishing Group, Covenant Media Press, Lexham Press, HarperOne, Harvest House Publishers, Bethany House, Crossway, FaithWords, Baker Academic

Cover Page Footnote
Ratio Christi at Liberty University

Anderson, Tawa J. *Why Believe: Christian Apologetics for a Skeptical Age* (Hobbs College Library), edited by Heath A. Thomas. Nashville: B&H Publishing Group. 2021. ISBN-13: 978-1087724232. 336 pages. \$26.99.

Tawa J. Anderson is an assistant professor of philosophy and the director of the Honors Program at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, Oklahoma. He holds a Ph.D. from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and his research interests are centered around contemporary Christian philosophy, particularly philosophical apologetics. He has written articles in several different journals, including *Christian Scholar's Review*, *Calvin Theological Journal*, and *Trinity Journal*. Anderson has led and spoken at many apologetic workshops, seminars, and conferences in western Canada, Kentucky, Oklahoma, and Colorado. Heath A. Thomas is President and Associate Professor of Old Testament at Oklahoma Baptist University. Prior to serving as President, Thomas served as Director of Ph.D. Studies and Associate Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Gloucestershire and he has a interest in researching the Minor Prophets, a Christian theology of lament, and theological interpretation of Scripture. Thomas is the author and co-author of six books, including *The Gospel of Our King: Bible, Worldview and the Mission of Every Christian*, *Faith Amid the Ruins: The Book of Habakkuk, A Manifesto for Theological Interpretation*, and *Hearing the Old Testament: Listening for God's Address*. This book presents straightforward explanations of core apologetics topics, ranging from arguments for God's existence and the legitimacy of Christ's resurrection to common questions regarding religious practices. This book appeals to both believers and unbelievers alike and offers a resource for those who wish to delve deeper in the realm of apologetics.

Bahnsen, Greg L. *By This Standard: The Authority of God's Law Today*. Murrell's Inlet, South Carolina: Covenant Media Press, 2020. ISBN-13: 978-0998025216. 275 pages. \$30.00.

Greg Bahnsen received a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Southern California. He also earned a Th.M. and M.Div. from Westminster Theological Seminary along with other degrees. Bahnsen was employed as a Full Time Scholar in Residence for the Southern California Center for Christian Studies. Some of his most famous works include *By This Standard*, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*, and *Always Ready*. Bahnsen wrote *By This Standard* to convince Christians of the remaining validity of God's law. He organizes the book into

three sections: The Authority of God's Law, Application of God's Law to Political Ethics, and Antagonism to God's Law. In these three sections Bahnsen argues that civil governments, families, churches, and individuals should live according to the law of God. This book is recommended for those who want a deeper understanding of how the Old Testament applies to believers today.

Bass, Justin W. *The Bedrock of Christianity: The Unalterable Facts of Jesus' Death and Resurrection*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020. ISBN-13: 978-1683593607. 272 pages. \$18.99.

Justin Bass received his PhD from Dallas Theological Seminary and is currently a professor of New Testament studies at Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary. He is from Frisco, Texas where he pastored a church for several years while working as a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary as well as Dallas Christian College. He has participated in many debates among well-known secular voices such as Bart Ehrman, Richard Carrier, Dan Barker, and many others, and has written other biblical works such as *The Battle for the Keys Revelation 1:18 and Christ's Descent into the Underworld*. In *The Bedrock of Christianity*, Bass presents the unalterable facts about the foundation of all of Christianity, which is the resurrection of Jesus. He calls into account the eyewitness reports, the apostle Paul, and many foundational verses that argue for the resurrection of Christ. He seeks to prove the Resurrection by searching through history, ideas, and archaeological findings to learn as much as possible about the life and death of Jesus and prove the bedrock of Christianity. This work is recommended for people of all beliefs, whether Christian, skeptic, agnostic, etc., as well as anyone seeking to know more about the life of Jesus and looking for further prove of His resurrection from the dead.

Enns, Peter. *How the Bible Actually Works: in Which I Explain How an Ancient, Ambiguous, and Diverse Book Leads Us to Wisdom Rather Than Answers -and Why That's Great News*. First edition. San Francisco: HarperOne, 2019. ISBN-13: 978-0062686749. 304 pages. \$15.99.

Peter Enns is a professor of Biblical Studies at Eastern University and is the host of the popular podcast, The Bible for Normal People. He obtained his Ph.D. from Harvard University and his research interests include the intersection of the ancient setting of the Bible and contemporary Christian faith. He has taught at

colleges such as Princeton Theological Seminary, Harvard Divinity School, and Temple University at the undergraduate, seminary, and doctorate level. Enns is a contributor to journals and encyclopedias, and has written, edited, and contributed to more than 20 books, including *The Sin of Certainty: Why God Desires Our Trust More than Our "Correct" Beliefs*, *The Bible Tells Me So: Why Defending Scripture Has Made Us Unable to Read It*, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament*, and *The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn't Say about Human Origins*. This book explores the concept that the collection of diverse literature found in the Old and New Testaments serves as more than a book of rules. Instead, Enns takes the position that the Bible is a helpful and spiritually formative book that points the readers toward wisdom. This book is written for Christians who are seeking a broader understanding of the Bible and scripture in general.

Geisler, David and Norman Geisler. *Conversational Evangelism: Connecting with People to Share Jesus*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers. 2014. ISBN-13: 978-0736950831. 256 pages. \$15.99.

David Geisler received a Master of Theology from Dallas Theological Seminary and Doctor of Ministry, focusing on apologetics, from Southern Evangelical Seminary. Norman Geisler received his Ph.D. in philosophy from Loyola University and founded a number of evangelical organizations, including The Evangelical Philosophical Society, the International Society of Christian Apologetics, Veritas Evangelical Seminary, Southern Evangelical Seminary, and was the primary architect of the Chicago Statement of Inerrancy. They state that the book is an attempt to make spiritual dialogue a pleasant experience for the average Christian living in a post-Christian world. The book is logically ordered, focused on what the authors call "pre-evangelism" methods and practice, but they maintain that struggles in evangelism are due to maturity and not method. Each chapter is written dialogically, including helpful illustrations, reflection questions, and fill-in application sections. Appendices at the end help to chart out the entire methodology. This book is recommended to church ministers, evangelists, and laity alike. As it relates to barriers to faith, this book helps the church gain access to others' barriers on an individual level.

McFarland, Alex. *The 10 Most Common Objections to Christianity*. Minneapolis, MN. Bethany House, 2007. ISBN-13: 978-0764215162. 256 pages. \$16.00.

Alex McFarland is the current president of Southern Evangelical Seminary as well as the Veritas Graduate School of Apologetics. He serves as the spokesman for Focus on the Family's program for teen apologetics and is a monthly columnist for "Plugged In" magazine. He received his M.A. in Christian Thought and Apologetics from Liberty University. He and his family live in Greensboro, North Carolina, and he is the author of many various works on Christianity and apologetics, some of which include *The Assault on America*, *Abandoned Faith*, *The God You Thought You Knew*, and *Life Answers*. In his book *The 10 Most Common Objections to Christianity*, McFarland explores the reasoning for skeptics and atheists to reject Christianity and provides sound, biblical arguments for biblical integrity and trustworthiness. He probes deeper into certain bold claims such as biblical errors, the problem of evil, knowing how God is real, and why a loving God would condemn people to hell. Essentially, McFarland explores why anyone should believe in Christianity at all and provides solid answers to the toughest of questions. This book is recommended for both skeptics seeking answers to difficult questions about Christianity as well as Christians desiring further clarification on difficult concepts.

McLaughlin, Rebecca. *Confronting Christianity: 12 Hard Questions for the World's Largest Religion*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019. ISBN-13: 978-1433564239. 240 pages. \$24.99.

Rebecca McLaughlin received a PhD in Renaissance literature from Cambridge University as well as degree in theological and pastoral studies from Oak Hill Theological College located in London, England, where she is from. She currently lives with her family in Cambridge, Massachusetts where she is a cofounder and principal consultant at Vocable Communications, a evidence-based firm dedicated to the truth within coaching, speaking, strategic communication, etc. She is a prolific speaker and author, responsible for the writing of many books such as *10 Questions Every Teen Should Ask about Christianity*, *The Secular Creed: Engaging 5 Contemporary Claims*, *4 Questions Everyone Should Ask About the World's Most Famous Story*, and *Is Christmas Unbelievable?* In her book *Confronting Christianity*, McLaughlin explores 12 of the most difficult questions that most Christians struggle to answer regarding why anyone should believe in Christianity at all. Some of these questions include bold claims that will argue that the world is better off without religion, science has disproved

Christianity, it oppresses women, it condones slavery, and is homophobic. McLaughlin expertly answers these objections in a respectful and loving way, and includes her own struggle with some of these questions, such as her own struggle with same-sex attraction, despite being in a successful heterosexual marriage. This book is primarily aimed at skeptics, but it will appeal to any Christian who seeks to have a better handle of the foundations of their own faith.

Murphy, Cara L. T. *The Inquisitive Christ: 12 Engaging Questions*. Brentwood, TN: FaithWords. 2020. ISBN-13: 978-1546038375. 288 pages. \$27.00.

Cara Murphy received her Master of Arts in Religious Studies focusing on biblical languages and is an instructor mentor at Liberty University's John W. Rawlings School of Divinity. The aim of this book is to refocus from engaging with questions asked by fallen man and reengage with questions offered by God. She does this by choosing a dozen questions in the Gospel narratives posed by Jesus, titling each chapter by individual questions asked (such as "Why are You Sleeping," and "Still You Do Not Know Me?"). The book is arranged into four parts: "Breaching the Barricade of Doubt," "Pushing Against the Natural," "Joining the Intimate Conversation," and "Entering a Deeper Commitment." Each chapter opens with a relevant verse, intriguing quote, then an elegant blend of the concepts underlying Christ's questions and excursus on personal memories and anecdotes, then ending with a lectio divina, and questions for reflection. The book is recommended for the church ministers and for anyone in the general public who may have trouble articulating questions concerning their faith.

Strahan, Joshua Marshall. *The Basics of Christian Belief: Bible, Theology, and Life's Big Questions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. 2020. ISBN-13: 978-1540962010. 240 pages. \$49.99.

Joshua Strahan received his PhD in New Testament from Fuller Theological Seminary, a Master of Divinity degree from Abilene Christianity University, and is an associate professor of biblical studies at Lipscomb University, where he teaches courses in Freshman Bible and New Testament, and has a background in campus ministry. He has conducted in-depth research on theological interpretation and the books of Luke and Acts. He is a prolific author and speaker, and has written many books, such as *Awaiting the King*, *The Limits of a Text*, and others. In his book *The Basics of Christian Belief*, Strahan essentially lays out the entirety of the foundation of Christianity, the Bible, theology, and biblical answers to some of

life's most difficult questions. Beginning in the Old Testament, Strahan outlines the full metanarrative of Scripture, detailing the life of Jesus, the Trinity, the New Testament church, the biblical plotline, and also digs into Christianity's distinctiveness, challenges to the Christian system, and some challenging or even controversial questions in the world today, such as the existence of a God, morality, the purpose of humanity and the universe, and what happens when we die. This book is recommended primarily for new Christians still navigating the world of faith, as well as any who are curious about the Christian faith and any believers who seek to better understand the full foundation of their beliefs.

Swain, Scott R. *The Trinity: An Introduction (Short Studies in Systematic Theology)*, edited by Graham A. Cole and Oren R. Martin. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020. ISBN-13: 978-1433561214. 160 pages. \$15.99.

Scott R. Swain is President and James Woodrow Hassell Chair of Systematic Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida. He holds a Ph.D. from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and his main research interests include the doctrine of God and the relationship between biblical interpretation and Christian doctrine. Swain has written and edited many books, including *Reformed Catholicity* (coauthored with Michael Allen), *The God of the Gospel: Robert Jenson's Trinitarian Theology and Trinity*, and *Revelation, and Reading: A Theological Introduction to the Bible and Its Interpretation*. Graham A. Cole, co-editor of this book, is a professor of biblical and systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. Cole received his ThD from the Australian College of Theology. He has written numerous books, including *Engaging with the Holy Spirit: Real Questions, Practical Answers*, *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, and *God the Peacemaker: How Atonement Brings Shalom*. Oren R. Martin, co-editor of this book, is an Associate Professor of Christian Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Boyce College in Louisville, KY. He is a scholar that specializes in researching topics like Pastoral Ministry and Counseling, Biblical and Systematic Theology, and Eschatology. Along with Cole and Swain, Martin has also written and edited many books and memoirs, including *40 Questions about Biblical Theology*, *The Person of Christ: An Introduction*, and *Bound for the Kingdom: The Land Promise in God's Redemptive Plan*. In this book, Swain attempts to examine the doctrine of the Trinity and explains the biblical foundations, systematic-theological structures, and practical relevance and application for the church today. This book is part of a five-part introductory series on systematic theology (covering faithful theology, the Trinity, attributes of God, the person of

Christ, and the church). It was written with the intention to reach a more popular level audience and does address them incredibly well in order to give them a better foundation in classical Trinitarian theology. Topics range over divine simplicity, doctrines of each person of the Trinity, God's triune work, and how the Trinity relates to eschatology.

Wright, N. T. *Broken Signposts: How Christianity Makes Sense of the World*. New York, NY: HarperOne. ISBN-13: 978-0062564092. 280 pages. 2020. \$27.99.

Nicholas Thomas Wright served as the Bishop of Durham in the Church of England for several years. After that, he served as a research professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at St. Mary's College in the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. Wright is a scholar on the relationship between Christian life and theology and is also an advocate for biblical re-evaluation on topics like justification, women's ordination, and the Christian views about life after death. He has written and edited many books, including *Simply Christian*, *Surprised by Hope*, *The Day the Revolution Began*, *Simply Jesus*, *After You Believe*, and *Scripture and the Authority of God*. The aim of this book is to explain how Christianity offers a unique and compelling explanation for the state of the world through the Gospel of John. This book outlines seven themes, also known as signposts, that point to the reality of God in the world: Justice, Love, Spirituality, Beauty, Freedom, Truth, and Power. In the end, the result is a beautifully written, rhetorically persuasive, and devotionally rich work of biblical and theological apologetics. This work is not written solely for an academic audience. Instead, it is written for those who wish to meditate on these seven ideals and how they point to Jesus.